

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price

District 3 Slate

August 2008

Third District, County of San Diego

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At Firefighters' Request, Supervisors Send Tax Measure To Voters; Slater-Price Concerned

Voters in November will decide whether to tax themselves \$52 per parcel with an estimated \$50 million raised annually going toward additional firefighting trucks and other equipment for San Diego County. The Board of Supervisors approved putting the tax request before voters in early August after adopting several changes to the plan, including several promoted by Supervisor Pam Slater-Price. The motion passed 5-0

Voters will have to pass the parcel tax by a two-thirds vote for it to become effective.

"Does San Diego County need to upgrade and improve its firefighting abilities? And are property owners willing to take on this extra burden at a time when home values are stagnant or declining and the price of gasoline hovers between four and five dollars a gallon? These are the hard ques-



The SuperScooper seen in action.

tions voters will decide later this year," explained Supervisor Slater-Price.

"In the aftermath of two devastating wildfires that struck within four years of each other, this Board of Supervisors made a substantial commitment - spending more

than \$19 million in the past year alone - to upgrade and improve this region's firefighting capacity. We agree that more can and should be done; however, the reality is the County of San Diego, due to mandates issued by the Legislature on how it is expected to fund programs required by the state, has limited options and funds."

It will take a near-universal agreement clearly and accurately defining the needs and objectives for the parcel tax to pass, predicts Supervisor Slater-Price.

"Voters will not blindly approve an open checkbook, even for a valid cause such as improved firefighting resources," she said.

The proposal approved by the Board of Supervisors calls for a 10-member regional authority to administer the funds.

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County Keeps Top-Notch Bond Ranking

Wall Street Recognizes Strong Management, Fiscal responsibility

Due to its strong fiscal management and conservative budgeting, the County of San Diego has again received strong ratings on its planned issuance of taxable Pension Obligation Bonds (Series 2008A). Three leading Wall Street agencies - Fitch, Standard & Poor's and Moody's - also affirmed the county's outstanding overall ratings, assigning it a stable outlook.

"This is certainly great news for county residents, and validates the leadership approach adopted by this Board of Supervisors," explained Supervisor Pam Slater-Price. "Even as the State of California grapples with a \$15 billion-plus deficit, the County of San Diego remains an island of

stability during a period of nationwide economic uncertainty."

The Series 2008A bonds are being used to refund a portion of the county's 2002 bond debt and will result in an estimated \$200 million savings to taxpayers due to lower interest rates.

The announcement by Standard & Poor's, followed both Moody's and Fitch, in assigning the county credit ratings that rank among the highest in California. These ratings allow the county to achieve a

low cost of borrowing for taxpayers.

In issuing its rating, Moody's noted that "the coming year is likely to be difficult, but both the rating and the stable outlook recognize management's proven ability to implement its fiscal policies."

"The county remains committed to keeping its financial house in order thanks to ongoing discipline and strong leadership from the Board of Supervisors," added Chief Administrative Officer Walt Ekard.

Credit Rating Agency	County Underlying Rating	Taxable Pension Obligation Bonds Series 2008A
Fitch	AA+	AA
Moody's	Aa2	Aa3
Standard & Poor's	AA+	AA

AROUND AND ABOUT IN THE THIRD DISTRICT

Summer Is No Time For Serving Bad Barbecue

Summer grilling season is here and county officials are reminding residents that safe food-handling skills are key to making a cook-out a big hit with guests.

Whether you are hosting a neighborhood barbecue or cooking for close friends and family members, minimize your chances of contracting foodborne illness by cooking ground beef to 157 degrees and chicken to an internal temperature of 165 degrees.

"With the trend toward outdoor kitchens and casual dining under the stars, it is important to bring the good habits of proper food preparation outside with you," advises Supervisor Pam Slater-Price. "Following common-sense precautions means your party will be the talk of the neighborhood, and not the emergency room at the local hospital."

Outdoor chefs know poultry should be thoroughly cooked to reduce the potential

for salmonella. Cooking to 165 degrees also reduces the probability of campylobacter, another serious foodborne pathogen.

Supervisor Slater-Price shares five steps for ensuring a successful outdoor barbecue:

1. Ensure your food is safe - Always purchase food from recognized vendors. A car trunk is not an approved or permitted source. Check to make sure a product is properly labeled.

2. Separate - Store raw meat, poultry and seafood separately so juices don't drip onto other foods and increase the risk of cross-contamination. Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat or poultry.

3. Clean - Wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds. Wash the exterior of melons or other fruits before slicing.

4. Cook - Check that your thermometer works or purchase a new one. Cook meat products thoroughly. Juices should run



clear, not red. Guessing a meat's temperature is a step toward possible poisoning.

5. Chill - Don't overpack the refrigerator or cooler. Ensure temperatures are 41 degrees or lower. Refrigerate perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours.

News of Note

You May Be Due A Refund...

About 900 county residents will receive a reimbursement if they claim their unexpected refund by the Sept. 30 deadline. Residents who overpaid a previous assessment or failed to cash a county-issued check can call (877) 829-4732 to see if they are due a refund.

Save Time, Gas; Vote By Mail

San Diego County residents can save time and gas by voting by mail, recommends Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, concurring with the effort to increase the number of people who permanently vote by mail.

Once a voter fills out the postcard, that person will automatically be sent a ballot for every election. Vote-by-mail ballots used to be referred to as "absentee ballots," but a 2007 California law changed the term to reflect the fact that anyone can vote by mail for any reason.

For more information, visit the Registrar's website at www.sdvote.com or call (858) 565-5800.

County Staff Win National Honors

The county Health and Human Services Agency's Behavioral Health Services division has received recognition at the local, state and federal levels for improving the lives of people with mental health, gambling or substance abuse problems. The following programs and individuals were recognized:

- **Serial Inebriate Program.** Received the award for Outstanding Achievement from the County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Association of California. The program was recognized for decreasing the use of police and emergency resources by chronic alcoholics.

- **Louise Lecklitner,** alcohol and drug program specialist. A 20-year veteran, Lecklitner received the Valuing Diversity Award for 2008 from the County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Association of California. Lecklitner was instrumental in ensuring the county provides appropriate and culturally sensitive treatment services for individuals from different ethnic and economic backgrounds. Lecklitner was also named "Outstanding Contributor in the Field" at the 22nd annual National Problem Gambling Conference.

- **Mental Health Housing Council** and

Dr. Piedad García. Both received Advocate of the Year Awards from the San Diego Housing Federation for efforts to improve the living conditions of consumers. Dr. García is director of the Adult and Older Adult Mental Health Services, which offers treatment, rehabilitation and recovery services to people who are experiencing persistent and severe mental illness or a mental health crisis.

- **Oasis Clubhouse for Transitional Age Young Adults.** Recognized by the National Association of Counties with a 2008 Achievement Award. Oasis is a new mental health program for seriously mentally ill young adults. The member-run program reaches out to people, ages 18 to 25, and provides employment, vocational training, education and supportive relationships.

- **Problem Gambling Counselor Training and Certification Program.** The county's innovative partnership with local casinos to train counselors on problem gambling issues was recognized by the National Association of Counties with a 2008 Achievement Award. Since its inception two years ago, 45 mental health and substance abuse counselors have received comprehensive training.

AROUND AND ABOUT IN THE THIRD DISTRICT



RB SMILES...

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price participated in the Spirit of the Fourth Parade in Rancho Bernardo. Supervisor Slater-Price, who served as Grand Marshal, rode in a Jaguar convertible owned and driven by David Wainwright of the Rancho Bernardo Kiwanis Club (above). The supervisor supported the parade with a \$15,000 community projects grant from the county.



... AND DM GROOVES

Music filled the evening air as the 2008 Summer Twilight Concert Series (below) kicked off in Del Mar. Supervisor Pam Slater-Price presented a \$10,000 community projects grant to the Del Mar Foundation to offset costs associated with the concert series to board member Lars Fahlberg and Executive Director Shelley Moore (left).



AROUND THE THIRD DISTRICT

FIRE

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The panel will consist of one representative from the county, one from the City of San Diego, four members representing other cities in the county, and four representatives of fire districts. Five non-voting members will represent the Navy, Marines, U.S. Forest Service, state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) and the county's Indian tribes.

—Supervisor Slater-Price promoted a revision that requires the four at-large city members to fairly and equitably represent the county's four regions - North County coastal, North County inland, which are in the Third District represented by Supervisor Slater-Price - as well as East County and South County.

"Is this the perfect solution?" asked Supervisor Slater-Price. "Frankly, no. Reality is this county remains extremely vulnerable to another conflagration like we saw during the Cedar-Paradise and Witch Creek wildfires, destroying homes and businesses, displacing families, and causing economic hardships. The painful memories of

home after home burning to the ground in Rancho Bernardo, Scripps Ranch and Escondido remains vivid."

Supervisor Slater-Price said she is dis-

"We have seen these wildfires start in the back country, then suddenly roar into our communities where they threaten lives and do millions of dollars in damage," said

Supervisor Slater-Price. "We need the means - the equipment, the planes, the other resources - to combat these fires."

Of the estimated \$50 million that would be raised annually if the parcel tax is approved, half would go toward regional fire-fighting efforts; the other half would return to local fire agencies to supplement their operations. The measure contains a 10 percent cap on administrative costs for the regional agency. Supervisor Slater-Price sought to have that cap reduced to 6 percent and the fire agency's staff capped at six but her motion was denied.

"While I understand the need for expanding our firefighting abilities, I believe this measure is going to be a hard sell to voters," said Supervisor Slater-Price.

"Will they see the cup half-empty or half-full? If they look at this with a jaundiced eye, I see problems. But there is only so much we can do with limited funds."



"Reality is this county remains extremely vulnerable to another conflagration like we saw during the Cedar-Paradise and Witch Creek wildfires ..."

- Supervisor Slater-Price

appointed the proposal does not do more to promote brush clearing and public education, which would ultimately reduce the costs of fighting a wildfire.

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